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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION TO SEYMOUR M. HERSH STORY  
- NOVEMBER 09-10, 2009

Summary: All Nov 9 media highlighted a Seymour Hersh's article published in the November 9-16 'New Yorker' claiming that the "U.S. has been negotiating highly sensitive understandings with the Pakistani military about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal." Along with the story, all dailies covered the U.S. Embassy's refutation of the story as "completely false." Pakistan Foreign Office's rejection of the report also received front page coverage. In its editorial, daily, "Dawn," raised a question that "how can there ever be any meaningful trust between the two states if one side routinely, and publicly, raises the alarm over something that is fundamental to the security of the other side?"

The story continued to lead the press Nov 10 for a second day, as Pakistan Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Majid dismissed the report as "absurd and plain mischievous." In its editorial, titled, "Nuclear Fables," the "Daily Times," called Hersh's scenario as "inconceivable." "The Nation," asked "why do we continue to give so much access to U.S. journalists when we know their intent?" (Note: "Nation" has lately expended its vigorous anti-American bias to malicious slander against American journalists.) The Urdu daily "Khabrain" maintained that "all American guns were first pointing towards Iran, but when it refused to bow down, America shifted its focus towards Pakistan's nuclear program." End Summary.

News Story: U.S. Seeking To Secure Pak Nukes In Case Of 'Crisis'  
"Daily Times" (11/09)

"The U.S. has been negotiating highly sensitive understandings with the Pakistani military about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh reported in the latest issue of 'The New Yorker magazine.' The journalist wrote that during meetings with current and former officials in Washington and Pakistan, he was told that the agreements would allow specially trained American units to provide added security for the Pakistani arsenal in case of a crisis. The principal fear was that 'extremists inside the military might stage a coup, take control of some nuclear assets, or even divert a warhead,' notes Hersh."

News Story: U.S. Embassy Denies Hersh Story "The News" (11/09)

"In response to allegations published in the press that the United States has been negotiating "understandings" with the Pakistani military about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson issued the following statement: "These allegations are completely false. The United States has no intention to seize Pakistani nuclear weapons or

material. Pakistan is a key ally in our common effort to fight violent extremists and foster regional security. We work cooperatively on a wide range of security assistance initiatives, including significant efforts focused on strengthening counterinsurgency capacities to foster stability. The United States has confidence in Pakistan's ability to protect its nuclear programs and materials, as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said during her recent visit to Pakistan." (Story also covered by 'The Nation,' 'Dawn,' 'Daily Times,' 'The Post,' 'Business Recorder,' 'Jang,' 'Express,' 'Mashriq,' 'The Statesman,' 'Pakistan Observer,' 'Ausaf,' 'Khabrain,' 'Aaj-Kal,' 'Al-Akhbar,' 'Islam')

News Story: No Deal With U.S. On Security Of N-Arsenal: FO "Dawn" (11/09)

"The Foreign Office has said that Pakistan will never allow 'any country to have direct or indirect access to its nuclear and strategic facilities.' 'No talks have ever taken place on the issue of the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal with U.S. officials,' a spokesman said in a statement issued on Sunday in response to assertions made in an article in 'The New Yorker magazine.'" (Story also covered by 'Dawn,' 'The Nation,' 'Daily Times,' 'The Post,' 'Business Recorder,' 'Pakistan Observer')

News Story: Report On Pak Nukes 'Absurd, Mischievous': No Foreign Entity Allowed To Cross 'Red Lines': CJCSC "Daily Times" (11/10)

"No foreign entity is allowed to cross the 'red lines' and gain intrusive access to strategic assets, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Tariq Majid said on Monday. Commenting on an article about Pakistan's nukes by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Seymour M. Hersh, which was published in 'The New

Yorker' - Gen. Majid said Pakistan had operationalized a very effective nuclear security regime, which had incorporated 'very stringent custodial and access controls.'"

News Story: No Compromise On N-Assets, National Interests: PM "The News" 11/09)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that no compromise would be made on national interests, security and the nuclear program of the country, while talking to reporters on Sunday."

News Story: Musharraf Calls Zardari 'A Criminal, A Fraud' "The News" (11/09)

"Former president General (Retd) Pervez Musharraf is very bitter about President Asif Zardari and in an interview with known journalist Seymour Hersh called him a 'criminal,' a 'fraud' and a 'third rater.' Hersh, reported in the latest issue of 'The New Yorker magazine.' 'Asif Zardari is a criminal and a fraud. He'll do anything to save himself."

Editorial: Nuclear Fables, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (11/10)

"It is quite surprising that a credible journalist like Seymour Hersh could come up with something so inconceivable. Pakistan cannot contemplate such an agreement and neither should the US. Pakistan has already taken proper measures to secure its nuclear weapons. The US did help Pakistan in formulating an accidental use risk reduction plan, but that is as far as the Americans were allowed to go.... There is no denying the extremist threat but to think that the nuclear weapons might end up with the Taliban or al Qaeda is too far-fetched to be dignified with serious consideration."

Editorial: Ringing The Alarm, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/09)

"In all the recriminations over the 'mixed signals' that the Pakistani security establishment sends to the U.S. in the fight against militancy, what is often overlooked is that the U.S., too, sends highly damaging signals to Pakistan and its people. The obsession with the 'safety and security' of Pakistan's nuclear program is as counter-productive to U.S.-Pak relations as any issue can get. No doubt nuclear weapons require the highest level of

caution and protection. But how can there ever be any meaningful trust between the two states if one side routinely, and publicly, raises the alarm over something that is fundamental to the security of the other side?"

Editorial: The Truth Please!, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/10)

"This is not the first time such revelations have come from U.S. official and journalistic sources. Periodically, the news erupts of some secret understanding between the U.S. and Pakistan regarding our nukes. Nor will this cycle ever end, unless there is a total reversal of policy relating to dealings with the U.S. The first issue that needs to be dealt with is that of access. Why do we continue to give so much access to U.S. journalists when we know their intent? The Foreign Office now claims that Hersh revealed his well-known anti-Pakistan bias. If that was the case, why was he given a visa?"

Editorial: Nukes - Again, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"As a responsible nuclear power we owe a duty to the rest of the world, and part of that duty is the protection of our assets for the safety of all. Talk of their 'insecurity' is at variance with ground reality and perhaps made with mischief in mind - and perhaps not a million miles from the 'insecurity' in the minds of others attendant upon a Muslim nation being nuclear-armed."

Editorial: Nuclear Safety, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (11/10)

"Hersh rings the alarm bells saying the 'extremists inside the military might stage a coup, take control of some nuclear assets, or

even divert a warhead.' U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson has called the report 'false and baseless,' saying the U.S. had no intention of seizing Pakistan's nuclear arsenals. Patterson said Pakistan was capable of securing its nuclear weapons.... This is not the first time that the U.S. print media has raised the specter of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal falling into the hands of the terrorists.... Pakistan's credentials as a responsible nuclear state have been proved over the years.... The U.S. media must show responsibility in tackling such sensitive issues."

Editorial: Political Parties Must Join Hands to Solve People's Problems, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (11/10)

"The simmering differences between the government and the opposition parties on petty issues and our rulers' indifference to the people's problems have seriously damaged the credibility of the politicians in the eyes of the masses. Meanwhile, a sensational report published in The New Yorker regarding our nuclear assets has also created serious concerns in the nation. Though the Foreign Office and the U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan have rejected this story, but the political leadership has badly failed in coming up to the expectations of the masses."

Editorial: U.S. Propaganda Against Nuclear Assets of Pakistan, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (11/10)

"The sensational reports by Seymour Hersh, published in the New Yorker, seems the continuation of the propaganda against Pakistan's nuclear assets. Historically, the conspiracies against our nukes had begun on the very first day when we laid the foundations of our nuclear program but no Pakistani ruler, including military and civilians alike, ever compromised on this issue of our national security. The Americans are accustomed to employ cheap tactics after their conspiracies fail and, resultantly, their propaganda machinery begins to fabricate false stories. As Pakistan toughens its stance on the nuclear issue, the U.S. hullabaloo regarding the vulnerability of our nukes gains momentum. The glorious success of the military operation against al Qaeda and the Taliban in our tribal areas, especially Waziristan, provides an ample testimony that these terrorist forces are no match to the operational

capabilities of the Pakistan army. Hence, to say that these terrorist organizations may take over our nuclear assets is nothing more than propaganda aimed at the vested interests."

Editorial: Pakistan Falling Victim to Journalistic Terrorism, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (11/10)

"The synchronization of the Seymour Hersh's report in the New Yorker regarding the safety Pakistan's nuclear assets and incessant attacks on our senior military officials points towards a very dangerous conspiracy being hatched against our country. It seems that India is behind all this propaganda aimed at destabilizing Pakistan. Though, a statement from the U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan has helped lessen the concerns regarding Pakistan's nuclear assets, Hersh claimed that former President Musharraf had already shared nuclear secrets with the U.S. government. We demand the government to take serious notice of this report in order to counter such venomous propaganda against Pakistan in future."

Editorial: Security Of Nuclear Assets: U.S. Propaganda And Heinous Designs, an editorial in the second largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (11/10)

"During General Musharraf's tenure, reports were published purporting that certain equipment was imported from the U.S. to safeguard the nuclear weapons, but the Musharraf government always denied these reports. Even now, the manner in which Americans have brought Blackwater into Pakistan, and the way they want to impose their own security system in Kahuta and elsewhere in the name of safeguarding the nuclear assets, seems to be part of a bigger conspiracy aimed at paralyzing Pakistan and turning it into fodder for India. This was also the objective behind conditions in the Kerry-Lugar bill and the New Yorker article. Hence, PM Gillani should give an unequivocal denial of such reports on the floor of the National Assembly."

Editorial: Security Of Nuclear Assets: U.S. Journal's Claim And Foreign Office Denial, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (circ, 25,000) (11/10)

"The U.S. administration should adopt a clear strategy to stop such provocative reports [as the one in New Yorker] from being published because freedom of expression and press freedom do not mean that panic should be created through such baseless stories.... Moreover, there will be no apprehension of Pakistani or any other country's nuclear assets landing in terrorists' hands once terrorists are eliminated; such stories will also die their own death when this happens. Instead of keeping the U.S. administration focused on the real issue [of terrorism], American journalists keep on raising hue and cry about only one aspect and possible danger [related to the nuclear assets], thereby complicating matters rather than resolving them."

Editorial: U.S. Magazine's Revelations And Pakistan's Nuclear Assets, an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (11/10)

"All American guns were first pointing towards Iran but when it refused to bow down, America shifted its focus towards Pakistan's nuclear program. Like Iran, Pakistan should also adopt a strong stance instead of being flexible."

Opinion: U.S. Media's Hostility, an op-ed by Zahir Kazmi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"The fresh wave of the media attack reinforcing the misperception that Pakistan's nukes are unsafe came in the backdrop of last month's militant assault on GHQ. One wonders why Washington-based journalists didn't squeak about the safety and security of the American nuclear arsenal when the Pentagon was attacked on 9/11... On the contrary, relatively informed people in the United States and even in India endorse Pakistan's claim that the initial vulnerability of Pakistan's strategic assets is over and nuclear weapons are fully secure under multi-layered safeguards. The people and leadership of Pakistan should not go for a knee-jerk reaction to

such media offensives. Pakistanis can bear with Seymour Hersh and David Sanger for occasionally demonizing Pakistan and learn from American administrations that have come under the former's fire many times."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson